Nova Scotia
Advisory Council on
The Status of Women

Conseil consultatif sur la
condition féminine de la
Nouvelle-Écosse

An agency of the Province of Nova Scotia

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NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women

The Journey Continues ...

NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Business Plan

2008-2009

Table of Contents

		Page
Message from Minister		1
Message from Chair		1
1.0	Mission, Vision, Mandate	2
2.0	Links to the Corporate Path	3
3.0	Planning Context	7
4.0	Strategic Goals	10
5.0	Core Business Areas	11
6.0	Women and Leadership, with Performance Measures	12
6.1	Women's Work and Economic Security, with Performance Measures	14
6.2	Personal Safety and Freedom From Violence, with Performance Measures	17
6.4	Health and Well-Being, with Performance Measures	20
7.0	Human Resource Strategy	22
8.0	Budget Context	22
9.0	Financial Management, Information Technology and Communications	22

Message from Minister

The Advisory Council aims to strengthen women's participation in public decision-making during 2008-2009, and to integrate solutions for women and their families into programs and services across the province.

Much of the Council's work is ongoing, with new initiatives building on previous relationships and successes. This year's goals and priorities align with the Province's vision and priorities for a New Nova Scotia, as well as the frameworks for social and economic prosperity.

The Council's guiding principle of inclusion drives many initiatives, including the very popular Campaign School for Women, roundtables and committee work on women's work and economic security, caregiving, health and well-being, and violence against women. The Province's public commitments to inclusion and access – for instance, in the framework for social prosperity – mandates and supports Council members and staff participating in community and government meetings, strategies, and initiatives.

Media relations, printed and electronic publications, the website and library services, and research, this work strives to increase public awareness about issues affecting women and inform development of policy for programs and services for women in all their diversity.

original signed by

Judy Streatch, Acting Minister for
Carolyn Bolivar-Getson
Minister responsible for the administration
of the *Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act*

Message from Chair

Ensuring that Provincial initiatives reflect the experiences and needs of Nova Scotia women is of paramount importance to Council members. During 2008-2009, we will provide supporting advice, input and recommendations into the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Crime Prevention Strategy, the Continuing Care Strategy, and a comprehensive program to address sexual violence.

Council members and staff are a bridge for women's groups and organizations and all levels of government – providing leadership, coordination and intergovernmental relations, and by brokering relationships and resources.

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women is a bridge to common ground, where we unite people, organizations and government, in order to put our collaborative intelligence to work on issues affecting equality, fairness and dignity for Nova Scotia women. By reaching out to women and by including them in our discussions and work, we'll be able to build a more inclusive society, to everyone's benefit.

Liz Chisholm,
Chair

1.0 Mission

To advance equality, fairness and dignity for all women in Nova Scotia.

Vision

A province where all women enjoy full equality

- where women of diverse cultures, races, religions and sexual orientation participate in decisions that affect their lives, families and communities ... where women sit in equal numbers on municipal councils and in the legislatures
- where legislation, policies and programs of governments reflect that equality, both in law and in fact
- where women's earning power equals that of men ... where women are welcomed in all professions and trades ... where household work and child care is valued by all and shared equally by women and men
- where women do not have to fear violence in their homes, workplaces or communities
- where women's health and well-being is a priority for women, health care services and government

Mandate

The mandate of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women derives from the statute establishing the Council. Section 4(1) requires the Council to advise the Minister and to

bring forward the concerns of women in Nova Scotia. Section 4(2) defines the powers of the Council, which may:

- receive and hear petitions and suggestions concerning the status of women
- undertake and recommend research on matters relevant to the status of women
- recommend and participate in programs concerning the status of women
- propose legislation, policies and practices to promote equality of opportunity and status
- publish reports, studies and recommendations

2.0 Links to the Corporate Path

Council's programs are directly aligned with the government's Corporate Path. The Advisory Council on the Status of Women has four programs:

- Women in Leadership;
- Women's Work and Economic Security;
- Women's Personal Safety and Freedom from Violence; and
- Women's Health and Well-Being

Each of these programs is guided by the principle of inclusion of women in all their diversity, with particular attention to historical disadvantage and marginalization due to factors such as race, ethnicity, family status, sexual orientation and disability.

The New Nova Scotia: A Path to 2020

Creating Winning Conditions

Achieving economic equality for women continues to be a driving force for Council. Programs linked to the principle of inclusion will enhance and expand employment opportunities for women in Nova Scotia and support a Globally Competitive Business Climate and Workforce. Also supporting these is our work to advance women in trades and technology, a long-term goal of Council.

With respect to Globally Competitive Connections, Council has earned national and international recognition by providing expertise as the Canadian government partner in developing a policy framework for women's education and training in China. Moreover, our new website allows online visitors to access library resources for education and research from anywhere.

Seizing New Economic Opportunities

Effective partnerships with government and community-based organizations have enabled Council to play an active role in increasing opportunities for women's economic well-being. Council works with industry sector councils as well as labour and women's organizations to increase recruitment and retention of women in trades and technology – supporting the drive for Nova Scotia to be a Leader in Information Technology. Council provides program advice, direction and implementation assistance to Women Unlimited, Techsploration, Hypatia Society and Women's Economic Equality Society – linking to the New Nova Scotia pillar to be a Leader in R&D and Innovation.

Building for Individuals, Families and Communities

The Healthy Balance Research Program's *Caregiver's Handbook* is being distributed, to help individual caregivers find the programs, services, and information they need to improve their lives and the lives of those they care for. Work this year will continue to address respite needs of caregivers. *Priorities for Caregivers* outlines recommendations from caregivers across the province. The recommendations continue to inform and spawn initiatives, such as a provincial respite committee and ongoing consultation on caregiving issues. This research program and its publications support the pillars Healthy, Active Nova Scotians and Accessible Services.

Council partners with government departments and agencies at all levels, academic institutions, and community organizations – to participate in community-based initiatives aimed at educating and promoting safer homes, streets and communities, and continues to lead a provincial initiative to enhance the safety and well-being of aboriginal women in Nova Scotia. This work supports the pillar Safe Communities.

Our efforts to enhance democracy and increase the political participation of women are essential to building and ensuring vibrant communities for all Nova Scotians – supporting Vibrant Communities.

Frameworks Guiding the New Nova Scotia

Links to Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity

One over-arching phrase from this strategy concerns the definition of sustainable competitiveness and closely matches Council's guiding principle of inclusion – "recognizing that the intrinsic worth of every human life is based on what each of us can give to society. It means recognizing that all citizens have a contribution to make."

The document's strategic focus areas also closely match Council's priorities under Trade and Competitiveness and Human Capital – Labour Force. For instance, the Government Priority "Re-train-encourage businesses to invest in workforce training and expanded recruitment" goes to initiatives such as Women Unlimited and Techsploration mentioned above.

Under Social Capital – Regional Capacity, Government Priorities include "Provide training opportunity for community leaders and "Support agencies that work with historically disadvantaged communities" ... The Council's Campaign School and other leadership programs support the former; roundtables and committee work on respite care, women with disabilities and family violence and Aboriginal women support the latter.

Links to Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric

The goals or common threads of social prosperity outlined in *Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric – Our Framework for Social Prosperity* closely align with our programs.

Advisory Council Programs	Framework for Social Prosperity
Principle of Inclusion	Inclusion and Access
Women in Leadership	Citizenship Development
Women's Work and Economic Security	Well-being, Lifelong learning
Women's Personal Safety and Freedom from Violence	Safety and Security
Women's Health and Well-Being	Health and Well-being

The framework provides opportunities for integrating solutions for women and their families into recommendations, programs and services throughout government and communities that will strengthen the social fabric of our lives.

For instance, a major focus this year will be to ensure that the Poverty Reduction Strategy is sensitive to the needs of women and their families. Roundtables for women with disabilities will continue with diverse groups of women, such as African Nova Scotian and immigrant women. Work with Aboriginal women and their communities continues during 2008-2009, to address woman abuse and family violence. As well, a substantial contribution to Nova Scotia's Caregiver Strategy comes from results of our Healthy Balance Research Program, including ongoing work on the respite needs of families who have children (of any age) with chronically high needs.

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Links to 2008-2009 Government Business Plan

See program information later in this document for initiatives.

Advisory Council Programs	Government Priorities
Women and Leadership	Educating to Compete
Women's Work and Economic Security	Educating to Compete
Women's Personal Safety and Freedom from Violence	Safer, Healthier Communities
Women's Health and Well-Being	Shorter Wait Times

3.0 Planning Context

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women remains, as it always has been, an organization that spans boundaries, that builds bridges between communities, all orders of government, and academic institutions. Those bridges are built for all women, with an ongoing commitment to inclusion and cultural diversity.

The Advisory Council has adopted inclusion as a principle which cuts across all of its program areas for good reason. Race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and other grounds of discrimination intersect with gender to multiply disadvantage and increase vulnerability. For example:

- Despite the fact that immigrant women, especially those who have immigrated recently, are more likely to have a university education than non-immigrant women in Nova Scotia, they continue to experience a much higher unemployment rate than non-immigrant women.
- Working-age (25-54) women with disabilities are educationally disadvantaged in comparison to working-age women without disabilities. Women with disabilities are only about half as likely to have university levels of education than women without disabilities (13 per cent versus 25 per cent) and they are less likely to have completed high school (69 per cent versus 80 per cent).
- The incidence of low income among women of African descent is considerably higher than it is for all women in the province (40 per cent versus 15 per cent according to the 2001 Census).
- Aboriginal women in Canada are three times more likely to have experienced spousal violence than non-aboriginal women and they are also more likely to experience the most severe and potentially life-threatening forms of violence compared to non-aboriginal women (54 per cent versus 37 per cent).

Although women in Nova Scotia have made significant advances in many respects, work remains to be done in each of our program areas as demonstrated below.

Women and Leadership

- Nova Scotia is celebrating 250 years of representational government from 1758 to 2008 through the Democracy 250 initiative. For the first time in history, women occupy 10 of the 52 seats (19.2 per cent) in the provincial legislature. For local governments, the percentages are about 21 per cent of municipal council seats and 7.3 per cent of mayors and wardens. Despite the record numbers of women involved in public life in our province, these numbers are below many other jurisdictions in Canada. Moreover,

women's representation on agencies, boards and commissions continues to be significantly lower than that of their male counterparts.

Women's Work and Economic Security

- Women in Nova Scotia continue to face economic inequality. The gap between male and female earnings continues to be significant, regardless of whether women are employed or self-employed. In 2005, women who worked full time in Nova Scotia earned 70.7 per cent of what their male counterparts earned.

- Too many women live in poverty. Sole-support mothers are in a particularly difficult financial position, with about half living below the low income cut-offs. In 2005, the median after-tax income of female headed lone parent families in Nova Scotia was $26,500, while for two-parent families with children it was $73,000 if there were two earners and $57,300 if there was one earner.

- Women with disabilities are significantly less likely to be in the paid labour force. Less than half (47.6 per cent) of Nova Scotian women with disabilities who are in their prime working years are in the paid labour force compared to more than 80 per cent of women without disabilities of the same age.

- At the end of the life cycle, too many Nova Scotian women find themselves in financial hardship because they were not in a position to accumulate pensionable earnings or savings during their lifetime. Unattached seniors are at particularly high risk of living in poverty and older women are much more likely to be unattached then older men.

- The participation of women and girls in non-traditional careers continues to be alarmingly low. In 2005-2006, women comprised only 5 per cent (167) of the 4097 active apprentices in the province, and, of these, the majority (52.7 per cent) were apprentice cooks. In the 2007-08 academic year, women comprise only 6 per cent of students enrolled in technology programs at the Nova Scotia Community College.

Women's Personal Safety and Freedom from Violence

- Violence against girls and women in all its forms is highly prevalent in the province. Women in Nova Scotia are about 40 times more likely to be killed by a spouse or intimate partner than they are to be killed by a stranger. Between 1991 and 2005, more than half (56.5 per cent) of female victims of homicide in Nova Scotia were killed by their spouses or intimate partners compared to 9.5 per cent of male victims.

- The high incidence of sexual assault in Nova Scotia, combined with low reporting and a discouraging response to sexual offences, leaves women in a position of increased vulnerability.

- In 2004, 8 per cent of women in Nova Scotia indicated they had experienced physical violence at the hands of their current or former spouse/intimate partner within the past five years. Close to two-thirds of intimate partner violence does not get reported to police. Compared to male victims, female victims of spousal assault are more likely to experience more serious forms of violence and suffer more severe physical and emotional consequences.

Women's Health and Well-Being

- As the number of older seniors increases, women face a heightened demand for unpaid assistance and caregiving. Women are predominantly the caregivers to seniors at 61 per cent compared to 39 per cent of men. Moreover, adult daughters assume the greater amount of caregiving responsibility towards parents. Research indicates that this development entails increased stress for women who are in paid work, particularly when they also have children to care for.

- In a recent provincial survey on caregiving, 20 per cent of caregivers indicated a range of physical and mental health impacts from physical injury and sleep deprivation to high levels of stress and feelings of hopelessness. The higher the intensity and duration of caregiving, the greater the health consequences.

- This emerging situation will increase pressure not only on women and their families, but also on employers and government.

Among challenges confronting the Advisory Council on the Status of Women are these:

- to respond effectively to the multiplicity of issues referred to us by government and community;

- to improve our outreach to rural and remote communities.

The first of the above challenges will be addressed by following up on the Treasury and Policy Board-sponsored policy forum held in collaboration with Council staff in 2007-2008 – "Beyond One Size Fits All." By gathering special policy agencies, the groundwork was laid for further work that fosters inclusion of the concerns of women and others – including racialized groups, seniors, people with health concerns, youth, linguistic minorities and of disability communities – in the considerations leading to policy formation and program design.

Members appointed to the Advisory Council on the Status of Women are a key resource for outreach to all parts of the province. In the coming fiscal year, we will identify additional ways to support Council members in bringing forward the concerns from women in their communities, for example, through hosting small focus groups.

The Federal-Provincial-Territorial Forum of Status of Women Ministers offers additional opportunities for joint action across jurisdictions in relation to aboriginal women. At an Iqaluit meeting in July 2007, ministers committed to work on "improving the social, economic and cultural well-being of Inuit, Métis and First Nations women, both on and off reserve". Work in pursuit of this commitment will be undertaken in the coming years.

Advisory Council publications and information resources are a valued contribution to both government and community users. With the launch of our new website, we also have the opportunity to update the "look and feel" of our communications products, which remain highly popular. As new Census data become available, we will be able to update our statistical publications as valuable input to several strategic initiatives such as the Long-Term Planning Council.

Council will continue to maintain and build capacity with our many partners. Our strengths include our dedicated Council members, high-performance staff and trusted partners in community and government. These relationships make it possible to advance equality, fairness and dignity for all women.

4.0 Strategic Goals

Members of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women have defined the following strategic goals for the agency's work. The goals align with and support work in each of the programs.

4.1 To increase the participation of women in all their diversity in decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities, with particular emphasis on those who face discrimination because of race, age, language, class, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or various forms of family status

4.2 To promote women's economic equality

4.3 To reduce violence against women and girls in communities, workplaces and families

4.4 To improve the health and well-being of women and their families

5.0 *Core Business Areas*

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women will carry out its responsibilities through the following three core business areas and four programs.

5.1 Policy and Research

Advises Minister on concerns and priorities of women, and formulates strategies and options to address these. Conducts quantitative and qualitative research in consultation with academic and community groups and government departments to ensure advice is a feasible, relevant, timely and accurate guide to governmental action.

5.2 Information and Education

Collects and disseminates information on women's issues to Minister, Council, staff, and other key stakeholders, including media and the general public. Through a comprehensive communications strategy, including an up-to-date website and active library services, Council informs and influences key stakeholders about issues and concerns affecting women, and about Council and government priorities, activities, accomplishments and opportunities for improvement in addressing women's issues.

5.3 Community Liaison and Rural Outreach

Through Council members and the Community Liaison and Rural Outreach Program, brings forward concerns of women from across Nova Scotia, with particular attention to disadvantaged groups. Partners with communities and agencies to advance equality for women in programs and services.

In order to achieve more focused work, the Council has realigned its work to fall into four programs:

- Women and Leadership
- Women's Work and Economic Security
- Personal Safety and Freedom from Violence
- Health and Well-Being

This will permit greater clarity in setting priorities and outcomes, and ensure effective participation in Treasury and Policy Board's Program Inventory and Costing Initiative.

6.0 2007-2008 Priorities and Performance Measures

The strategic goals of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women advance equality, fairness, and dignity of all women in Nova Scotia. Our four strategic goals are addressed through four programs, with associated performance measures.

Strategic Goal 1: To increase the participation of women in all their diversity in decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities, with particular emphasis on those who face discrimination because of race, age, language, class, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or various forms of family status

The goal of inclusion addresses government priorities in areas of cultural diversity and the social inclusion of all Nova Scotians. It is the policy of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women that this goal will be an overarching one for all the Council's work. No projects or initiatives will be undertaken without a consideration of the ways in which social inclusion and cultural diversity are addressed and ongoing monitoring of the degree to which this objective is realized will be maintained.

Program – Women and Leadership (Government Priority: Educating to Compete)

Priority Increase the numbers and diversity of women in public and political life.

Strategic Actions

- Participate in the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities Women in Local Government project by supporting 4 campaign schools for potential municipal candidates.
- Advise community groups who wish to conduct their own programs related to women's political participation and leadership

Priority Recognize the contribution of women leaders in advancing fairness, dignity and equality of women.

Strategic Action

- Celebrate Women's History Month each October through appropriate events that profile women leaders.

Priority Exercise leadership at the international level, by sharing expertise and experience with international women's organizations.

Strategic Action

- Assist the All-China Women's Federation with policy development regarding education and training for women.
- Host other international delegations as invited to do so.

To increase the participation of women in all their diversity					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**BASELINE DATA**	**TARGET 2008/2009**	**ULTIMATE TARGET**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
The work of the Advisory Council addresses diversity and social inclusion	Proportion of Council's briefs, statistical publications, informational reports, etc., that address diversity and social inclusion	Year 01-02: 100% Year 02-03: 89% Year 03-04: 100% Year 04-05: 86% Year 05-06: 90% Year 06-07: 100%	2008-09: 100%	100%	Consistently review Council products as they are developed for diversity/social inclusion content.
Increased numbers of Nova Scotia women obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in public and political life	Number of Women's Campaign School graduates or political skill-building workshop participants	2004-05: 30 (25 from NS, 5 from out of province) 2005-06: 28 2006-07: One political skill-building workshop offered 2007-08: 29 graduates	30 graduates	30 graduates per year	Conduct a campaign school for women interesting in standing for political office Participate in the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities Women in Local Government project.

Strategic Goal 2: To promote women's economic equality

Women's participation in the full range of education, training and occupational opportunities is an integral part of building a learning culture, greater prosperity, and supporting families and Nova Scotians in need within a context of fiscal responsibility and accountability. Council will continue to align its work with the overarching policy frameworks of the Province, including Opportunities for Prosperity, the economic framework, and Weaving the Threads, the social framework.

Program – Women's Work and Economic Security (Government Priority: Educating to Compete)

Priority Expose girls and women to occupations where they remain under-represented, particularly in science, trades and technology.

Strategic Action

- Collaborate with partners from government, community, business, colleges and universities in programs that provide women and girls with exposure to and participation in occupations where they are under-represented.

Priority Inform the development and implementation of the Province's economic and social policy initiatives through relevant research and policy recommendations.

Strategic Actions

- Monitor and publish statistical information depicting women's role in Nova Scotia's paid and unpaid work force.
- Demonstrate the gendered risks of poverty.
- Consult with the Poverty Reduction Working Group.
- Participate in FPT initiatives related to modernization of maternity and parental benefits.
- Recommend measures to assist the economic integration of women with disabilities.

Priority Highlight importance of women's paid and unpaid work.

Strategic Actions

- Collaborate with partners across the province to celebrate International Women's Day.

To promote women's economic equality					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**BASELINE DATA**	**TARGET 2008/2009**	**ULTIMATE TARGET**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
Increase women's and girls' exposure to and participation in science, trades and technology occupations	Number of girls and women exposed to non-traditional occupations for women* * The Advisory Council is one of several collaborating partners in this initiative.	Girls (Techsploration): 1998/99 to 2002/03: 48 each year 2003/04: 99 2004/05: 105 2005/06: 103 2006/07: 135 Women (Women Unlimited): 2006: 17 2007: 44	150 girls 50 women	150 girls per year 50 women per year	Collaborate with partners from government, community, business, colleges and universities in programs that provide women and girls exposure and participation in occupations in which they remain under-represented

To promote women's economic equality					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**BASELINE DATA**	**TARGET 2008/2009**	**ULTIMATE TARGET**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
Government and community gain a fuller understanding of the issues affecting women's paid and unpaid work	# of publications disseminated that relate to women's economic security	Publications downloaded from website: 2004/05: 15,711 2005/06: 14,665 2006/07: 19,447* * this figure is based on 11 months of data as no data is available for March/07 due to technical problem with gov't server tracking software	20,000* * because of continuing problems with gov't server tracking software, this data will not be available for 2007/08	20,000 per year	Revise and disseminate *Money Matters* and *Women's Paid and Unpaid Work* reports Produce and disseminate report on *Precarious Employment of Women in Nova Scotia* Disseminate the findings of the *Action Plan For the Employment and Economic Well-Being of Women with Disabilities* Conduct roundtables with diverse groups of women with disabilities Make presentations to government departments and interested parties
	# of presentations to government and other audiences	n/a This is a new measure	3	3	
	# of media articles	n/a this is a new measure	5	5	

Strategic Goal 3: To reduce violence against women and girls in communities, workplaces and families

Program – Personal Safety and Freedom From Violence (Government Priority: Safer, Healthier Communities)

The reduction of violence in all its forms continues to be a major commitment for Council. Council has taken the lead in establishing a provincial working group to address the impact of policy and the effects of family violence on aboriginal women as well as the impact to aboriginal communities. Staff work collaboratively with community organizations and committees on educational activities related to violence against women. Council has also developed a partnership with community organizations working in the area of sexual assault to conduct a province wide needs assessment on sexual assault programs and services. Furthermore, in the coming year, the issues related to family law as it applies to women leaving abusive relationships will be further explored and recommendations for improved policy and practice brought forward.

Priority Contribute to the Province's Crime Prevention Strategy by formulating policy and program recommendations to address violence against women, with particular attention to family law applied in domestic violence situations.

Strategic Actions

- Develop policy and program recommendations.
- Develop education materials and raise awareness about new resources.

Priority Make evidence-based recommendations to government and policy-makers for a comprehensive, provincial program for victims of sexual violence.

Strategic Actions

- Develop policy and program recommendations to address the needs of victims of sexual violence

Priority Work with First Nations communities, governments, and the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia- Canada Tripartite Forum to develop culturally appropriate models of prevention and intervention to assist women, families and communities in responding to family violence.

Strategic Actions

- Respond to recommendations from the F/P/T summit in Newfoundland in partnership with other government departments and aboriginal organizations.
- Participate with other Canadian jurisdictions in work to reduce violence against aboriginal women, as determined by the FPT Forum of Status of Women Ministers.

Priority Mark the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on December 6.

Strategic Actions

- Hold a commemorative ceremony in Province House on December 6.
- Council members participate in activities to mark the day in their home communities.

To reduce violence against women and girls in communities, workplaces and families					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**BASELINE DATA**	**TARGET 2008/2009**	**ULTIMATE TARGET**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
Strong utilization of informational resources developed and disseminated by the Advisory Council pertaining to personal safety and violence against women	Track distribution and dissemination of *Making Changes* and other relevant resources	2001-02: 13,300 2002-03: 11,430 2003-04: 40,337 2004-05: 38,434 2005-06: 21,672 copies of *Making Changes* were either requested (hard copy) or downloaded from Council's website.	25,000+* * this is a new target based on data from past several years.	25,000 per year on average	Update and reprint *Making Changes*, and other publications as needed. In the 2007-08 fiscal year, the Advisory Council will release an updated edition.
Provincial strategies such as the *Crime Prevention Strategy* continue to address violence against women	Recommendations are gender-sensitive	n/a as this is a new measure	Recommendations made in strategies to address violence are gender-sensitive	Recommendations made in strategies to address violence are gender-sensitive	Consult stakeholders and develop policy and program recommendations to submit to government.

Strategic Goal 4: To improve the health and well-being of women and their families

Building on the success of the Healthy Balance Research Program, opportunities for effective policy and program interventions to assist caregivers will be identified and communicated to relevant target audiences. Service gaps, such as the respite needs of women providing care to children with chronically high needs, will begin to be addressed.

Program – Women's Health and Well-Being (Government Priorities: Safer, Healthier Communities; Shorter Wait-times)

Priority Make evidence-based recommendations to provincial and federal governments, and to professional and community audiences about the support needs of women in care-giving and care-receiving roles.

Strategic Actions

- Continue disseminating findings of Healthy Balance Research Program (HBRP) to policy audiences, as well as service providers and community.
- Build on HBRP findings by initiating policy-based research work and caregiver education/consultation on respite for families who have children/adult children with chronically high needs.
- Conduct province-wide pre-workshop survey on the respite needs of families.
- Continued leadership of the provincial Respite Committee.

Priority Through academic, community, and government partnerships, build knowledge and skills in the promotion of women's health among students, researchers and community members, and to communicate the results of that work to relevant target audiences.

Strategic Actions

- Collaborate with academic partners to develop meaningful knowledge transfer/exchange opportunities for students examining women's health issues.
- Share expertise and experience in gender-based analysis and women's health with research and community partners.
- Participate in development of women and depression awareness campaign for Mental Health Awareness Week.

To improve the health and well-being of women and their families					
OUTCOME	**MEASURE**	**BASELINE DATA**	**TARGET 2008/2009**	**ULTIMATE TARGET**	**STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
Target audiences gain deeper understanding of the health implications of care-giving.	Number of presentations made and participants reached	2007/08: 11 presentations, 233 participants	10 presentations with an average of20 participants at each	6 presentations per year for next two years with average of 20 participants at each	Continue disseminating findings of Healthy Balance Research Program to policy, clinical, and community audiences.
Caregivers acquire information, skills, and tools necessary to enable/enhance their own respite outcomes.	Workshops for parents: # workshops offered # participants evaluation ratings of participants	n/a as this is a new measure	1 workshop with 100 participants in HRM	Total of 4-5 additional workshops around province with 25 caregivers participating in each	Build on HBRP findings by initiating policy-based research work and caregiver education/consultation on respite for families who have children/adult children with chronically high needs.
Policy and program staff gain deeper understanding of gender analysis on health issues	Number of presentations made	n/a as this is a new measure	3	3	Conduct survey on the respite needs of families. the provincial Respite Committee. Share expertise on gender analysis in health.

7.0 Human Resource Strategy

Council continues to take proactive steps to ensure that new employees and newly-appointed Council members are representative of diverse communities. When appropriate, Council does targeted recruitment for Council members to ensure diversity of membership. Orientation of new Council members is conducted on an as-needed basis, and staff supports council members in various local activities.

Council consults with the Public Service Commission's diversity pool when filling casual, temporary and permanent positions. Given staff size (8 FTEs), orientation is done on an individual basis, taking into account the informational and developmental needs of each staff member. Council's human resource strategy is in alignment with the Government's Corporate Human Resources Plan, with particular attention to diversity and active participation in Occupational Health and Safety initiatives.

8.0 Budget Context

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women			
	2007-2008 Estimate	**2007-2008 Forecast**	**2008-2009 Estimate**
Program & Service Area	($thousands)	($thousands)	($thousands)
Total Program Expenses			
Administration	$756	$831	$835
Field Work Program	$160	$128	$168
Total Program Expenses	**$916**	**$959**	**$1003**
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	**8.0**	**7.5**	**8.0**

9.0 Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology and Communications

Finance, Human Resources and Information Technology functions are carried out on behalf of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women by the Department of Justice CSU. This enables the Advisory Council to function with minimal expenditure for administrative overhead.

A communications advisor will continue to be assigned to the Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The advisor provides 1) communications support to the Minister, Council Chair, members and staff, 2) strategies and tactics on initiatives and programs, and 3) messaging on public information, policy documents and media plans that support the Province's work to advance equality, fairness and dignity for Nova Scotia women.